

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
MFA FINAL VISUAL PRESENTATION

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF FINE ARTS


IN

PAINTING

DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL 1995



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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled:

Final Visual Presentation

submitted by KATHLEEN MARIE DUNCAN in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Art.

DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

GRADUATE STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

I hereby release the following works for incorporation into the University Collections,
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TITLE

DATE

MEDIUM

SIZE

"Untitled"

1994

oil +
wax on
panel

4x4 feet

presently on loan to President. ~~Darren~~ R. Fraser.

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NAME OF AUTHOR KATHLEEN MARIE DUNCAN TITLE OF
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Kathleen Duncan - Colour, light and space

The focus of my work is a development of a visual language using colour, drawing and surface; the traditional elements of painting. My starting objective was to find a method of integrating these elements which would be both simple and rich in expression and compositional possibilities. Of course, colour, drawing and surface can be used and organized in a multiplicity of ways. A rhythmic structure of a regular or irregular grid is one of the available solutions. In my work, the various elements are organized around the horizonless and weightless frontality of a grid. Although the grid itself is of secondary importance, it functions as a means of organizing the discrete elements into a coherent composition.

I chose the grid because it implies an infinite extension of pictorial space beyond the picture plane itself. However, because of its explicit rhythm comprising of simple individual elements repeated in space, it is finite. This duality of form, being simultaneously finite and infinite, can express a dynamic tension between internal and external, subject and object, light and darkness, and so on. Far from being arbitrary, the forms and hues are open to interpretation without falling into decorative banality. The micro and macro are tied by the same 'glue', simultaneously mathematical and aesthetic.

I start with a single regular grid and fill the individual units with colour using intensity, temperature and value. The colour depends on coupling of hues and contrasts that generate their own brilliance. The hue is determined by light. The colour is used to highlight various sections of space. Sometimes I join cells together into larger areas of solid hue to break the regularity of the grid. Gradually I overlay another grid on top of the previous one and resolve the relationships between the units. Over time, the process of adding layers of grids and colour leads to a dynamic tension within the painting. By deleting or altering different systems of grids I develop a sense of temporal and historical progression in the painting; its own individual 'archaeology'. The transitions emerging between areas of solid colour and order implied by the grid is capable of generating an intense pictorial experience. The multiplicity of emerging forms is reduced to position, arrangement, rhythm and organized spontaneity. I am satisfied with the resolution of the painting when a balance between colour, light and spatial relationships of the painting is achieved.

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